

or maize, with which they satisfied themselves and arrived at the place where the governor was.

XVI

THE INSOLENT REPLY OF THE LORD OF THE PROVINCE OF ACUERA

The whole army having assembled in Acuera, while the men and horses were recovering from the hunger they had suffered in the days past, which was no small thing, the governor with his accustomed clemency sent messages to the cacique Acuera with some of his Indians whom he had captured, saying that he begged him to come out peaceably and to consent to have Spaniards for friends and brothers; that the latter were a warlike people and brave, who, if their friendship was not accepted, could do much harm and damage to his lands and vassals. At the same time he was to understand and be convinced that they did not have the intention of injuring anyone, as they had not done in the provinces they had left behind them, but on the contrary felt a strong friendship for those who had been willing to receive it. Their chief intention was to reduce through peace and friendship all the provinces and nations of that great kingdom to the obedience and service of the most powerful emperor and king of Castilla, their lord, whose servants they were; and the governor desired to see and speak with him in order to tell him these things more fully and to give him an account of the order that his king and lord had given him to deal and communicate with the lords of that land.

The cacique replied haughtily, saying that he had already had much information from other Castilians who had come to that country years before as to who they were, and he knew very well about their lives and customs, which consisted in occupying themselves like vagabonds in going from one land to another, living from robbing, pillaging, and murdering those who had not offended them in any way. He by no means desired friendship or peace with such people, but rather mortal and perpetual warfare, and even though they might be as brave as they boasted of being, he had no fear of them because he and his vassals considered themselves no less valiant, as proof of which he promised to wage war against them during all the time that they might see fit to remain in his province, not in the open nor in a pitched battle, although he could do so, but by waylaying and ambushes,

taking them off guard. Therefore he warned and admonished them to watch and be on their guard against him and his people, whom he had ordered to bring him every week two heads of Christians, and no more; that this would satisfy him because by beheading two of them every eight days, he thought to put an end to all of them within a few years, for although they might settle and make establishments they could not perpetuate themselves because they brought no women to have children and carry the next generation onward. To what they said about giving obedience to the king of Spain, he replied that he himself was king in his own country and there was no necessity for becoming the vassal of another who had as many as he. Those who put themselves under a foreign yoke when they could live free he regarded as very mean-spirited and cowardly. He and all his people protested that they would die a thousand deaths to maintain their liberty and that of their country; and he gave that reply once and for all. With regard to their vassalage and their statement that they were servants of the emperor and king of Castilla, and that they were going about conquering new lands for his empire, he said that it was well and good that they were all of this; that now he held them in less esteem, since they admitted being servants of another and that they were laboring and gaining kingdoms so that others might rule them and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Inasmuch as they were undergoing hunger, fatigue, and other hardships in such an enterprise, and risking their lives, it would be better and more honorable and profitable for them to win and acquire these things for themselves and their descendants than for strangers; and since they were so mean-spirited that, being so far away, they did not abjure the name of servants, they need not hope for [his] friendship at any time, for he could not bestow it in such a mean way, nor did he wish to know the order of their king. He knew what he might do in his own country and the manner in which he must treat them; therefore they should leave as quickly as they could if they did not all wish to die at his hands.

On hearing the Indian's reply, the governor was amazed to see with what arrogance and pride of spirit a barbarian was able to say such things, for which reason from that time forward he attempted more insistently to win his friendship, sending him many messages couched in affectionate and courteous terms. But the curaca said to all the Indians who went to him that he had sent his reply the first time and that he intended to give no other response, nor did he.

The army was in this province twenty days, resting from the hardship and hunger of their past march and collecting the things necessary for passing on. During these days the governor was engaged in obtaining information

and reports concerning the province. He sent runners in every direction to observe carefully and diligently and note the good parts of it, and they brought favorable news.

In those twenty days the Indians were not sleeping; on the other hand they did not fail to carry out the threats and menaces their curaca had made against the Castilians, and so that the latter might see that they had not been empty ones, they were so watchful and astute in their stratagems that no Spaniard wandered a hundred paces from the camp that they did not shoot him with arrows and immediately behead him, and as quickly as his people went to his assistance they found themselves without their heads, which the Indians carried off to present to their cacique, as he had ordered them to do.

The Christians interred the bodies of the dead where they found them. The Indians returned the following night, disinterred them, cut them in pieces, and hung them from the trees where the Spaniards could see them. By such acts they complied well with what their cacique had ordered them, namely, that they bring him two heads of Christians every week, for in two days they brought him four, two at a time, and fourteen during the whole space of time the Spaniards were in his country, not counting those whom they wounded, who were many more. They came out to make these assaults so safely and so near their haunts, which were the woods, that they could return to them very easily, having done as much damage as possible, without losing a single opportunity that was offered them. From this the Castilians came to verify the truth of the words that the Indians whom they found all along the road through the great swamp had shouted to them: "Go on, thieves, traitors; in Acuera and farther on in Apalache they will treat you as you deserve; they will cut you all in quarters and pieces and hang you from the highest trees along the road."

The Spaniards, however they might try, did not kill fifty Indians in that whole time, because they were very cautious and vigilant in their stratagems.

XVII

THE GOVERNOR ARRIVES IN THE PROVINCE OF OCALI, AND WHAT TOOK PLACE THERE

At the end of the twenty days the governor left the province of Acuera without doing any damage in the pueblos or the cultivated fields, so that

they would not regard them [the Spaniards] as cruel and inhuman. He went in search of another province, called Ocali.² There are about twenty leagues from the one to the other. They directed their march toward the north, bearing a little to the northeast. They passed an uninhabited region ten or twelve leagues in extent, which lies between the two provinces, in which there were large forests of walnuts, pines, and other trees unknown in Spain. They all appeared to have been set out by hand, there being so much space from one to another that horses could even run between them. It was a very open and pleasant forest.

In this province there were no longer found so many swamps and difficult passes at miry places as were in the former ones, because, as it was farther removed from the coast, the salt marshes and bays that entered the others from the sea did not reach to them. In the former region the land is so low and flat that the sea extends into it in some places thirty leagues, in others forty, fifty or sixty, and in some more than a hundred, forming great swamps and morasses that make it difficult and even impossible to cross them. These Castilians found some so bad that upon placing the foot on them the earth trembled for twenty or thirty paces round about. On top it looked as if horses could pass over it, for the surface was dry, without a sign that there was water or mud underneath. On breaking through that surface the horses and the men as well sank and were drowned, unable to help themselves. They were put to much trouble in going around these places. They also found this province of Ocali more abundant in supplies than the others we have mentioned, both because there were more people in it who cultivated the soil and because it was more fertile in itself. The Spaniards noticed the same in all the provinces they traversed throughout this great kingdom, that is, the farther inland the country was and the more removed from the sea, the more populous it was and the more fertile and productive in itself.

In the four provinces referred to, and in the others we shall mention later, and generally throughout the land of La Florida that these Spaniards discovered, they experienced a great scarcity of provisions of meat, because they found none in all the region that they passed through, nor did the Indians have any domesticated cattle. There are many common deer and fallow deer throughout that country, which the Indians kill with their bows and arrows. The fallow deer are so large that they are little smaller than the red deer of Spain, and the red deer are like large bulls. There are also very large bears and panthers, as we said above.

²See note 1 concerning the identity of Garcilaso's Ocali in light of the other chronicles.



A Palmetto. From their landing site in Florida the expedition entered the flat, sandy, pine barrens of the southeastern coastal plain. Here they marched through seemingly endless forests of longleaf pine trees, broad swamps, and vast thickets of saw palmetto. The berries of the saw palmetto are edible, and the natives used the leaves to thatch their houses. (Courtesy of the University of Alabama Museum of Natural History)

Having passed over the twelve leagues of uninhabited country, they marched another seven through inhabited lands having a few homes scattered through the fields, not in the form of a pueblo. Throughout the seven leagues there was this form of habitation. At the end of them was the principal pueblo, called Ocali, like the province itself and its cacique. He and all his people, carrying what they had in their houses, fled to the woods.

The Spaniards entered the pueblo, which had six hundred houses. They lodged themselves in them, finding there much food in the form of maize and other grains, vegetables, and various fruits, such as plums, nuts, raisins, and acorns. The governor at once sent Indians to the chief curaca, offering him peace and the friendship of the Castilians. The Indian excused himself on that occasion with courteous words, saying that he could not come out so soon. After six days he came out peaceably, though still suspicious, because in all the time that he was with the Spaniards he never acted honestly. The governor and his people, having received him very affectionately, pretended not to see the ill will they perceived in him, so that he might not be more disturbed than he was already with his own evil plans, as we shall soon see.

Near the pueblo there was a large river, carrying much water, that even then, it being summer, could not be forded. There were precipices on either side as high as the length of two pikes and as perpendicular as walls. Throughout La Florida, because of the almost total absence of stone in the country, the rivers cut very deeply and have very steep banks. This river is described more fully than the others because further mention will be made of a notable feat that thirty Spaniards performed on it.

In order to cross this river it was necessary to construct a wooden bridge, and the governor having made an agreement with the curaca to have his Indians build it, they went out one day to see the site where it was to be placed. While they were walking about planning the bridge, more than five hundred Indian archers rushed out of some underbrush that was on the other side of the river and shouted loudly: "You want a bridge, do you, thieves, vagabonds, foreigners? Well, you will not see it made by our hands!" Whereupon they sent a shower of arrows toward the place where the cacique and the governor were. The latter asked, "How is it that you permit this impudence, when you have represented yourself as a friend?" The cacique replied that it was not in his power to remedy it because many of his vassals, seeing him inclined to the friendship and service of the Spaniards, had refused him obedience and lost respect for him, as was shown on that occasion, for which he was not to blame.

At the shout the Indians raised on shooting their arrows, a greyhound,

which one of the governor's pages was leading by the collar, jumped and knocked down the page, dragging him on the ground. He gave a leap and threw himself into the water, and however much the Spaniards might call to him, he would not come back. Seeing the dog swimming, the Indians shot at him so skillfully that they placed more than fifty arrows in his head and shoulders, which were exposed. With all this the dog was able to come out on the bank, but on leaving the water he at once fell dead. This grieved the governor and all his people very much, because he was an extremely fine animal and much needed in the conquest, during which, in the short time that it had lasted, he had made forays that caused no little wonder against the Indian enemies, both by day and by night, only one of which we shall recount, in order to show his prowess.

XVIII

CONCERNING OTHER EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE PROVINCE OF OCALI

During the six days that the cacique Ocali was in hiding in the woods, before he came out peaceably, the governor took care to send him three or four messengers every day with friendly messages, so that the Indian might see that they were not forgetting him. They returned with the reply that the curaca gave them. With one of these messengers there came four young Indian nobles with a great many plumes on their heads, which are the principal adornment that they wear. They came for no reason except to see the Spanish army and to note what kind of people the new arrivals were, how they looked, what kind of clothing and arms they wore, what sort of animals the horses were, with which they had so frightened them. In short, they came to confirm or undeceive themselves regarding the great things that they had heard said of the Spaniards.

Having received them affably, because he knew that they were nobles, and curious, and that they came only to see this army, the governor, having given them presents of things from Spain to make friends with them and through them with the cacique, ordered that they be taken to another part of his lodgings and served with food.

The Indians were eating very quietly when, at a moment when they felt that the Castilians were off their guard, all four jumped up together and ran

at full speed toward the woods, so swiftly that the Christians were doubtful of being able to overtake them on foot, for they did not follow them, nor did they pursue them on their horses, as they did not have them at hand.

The greyhound, which happened to be nearby, hearing the shout the Indians gave and seeing them run, followed them. As if he had human understanding, he passed by the first whom he overtook and also the second and the third, until reaching the fourth, who was running ahead. Seizing him by the shoulder, he threw him down and held him on the ground. Meanwhile the Indian who was nearest came up; as the dog saw that he was passing by he loosed the first one and caught the one who was passing, and having thrown him down, he grasped the third, who was now passing by, and having done the same with him as with the first two, he went at the fourth, who now came up. Throwing him to the ground, he returned to the others and ran between them with such dexterity and skill, leaping at the one who was down and grasping and pulling down him who raised up, and threatening them with loud barks at the same time that he seized them, that he confused and held them until the Spaniards came up to their assistance. They took the four Indians and returned with them to the camp. Taking each one separately, they questioned them as to why they had fled, so without occasion, fearing that this might be a countersign for some treachery that they had plotted. All four replied as one person that they had done it for no reason at all except a vain fancy that seized them, it appearing to them that it would be a great exploit and proof of gallantry and agility if they should escape from the midst of the Castilians in that manner. They thought to boast of this brave exploit later among the Indians, because of its being in their opinion a great victory, of which they had been deprived by the hound Bruto, for so the dog was named.

At this point Juan Coles, having recounted some of the things that we have told, tells another particular exploit of the hound Bruto. He says that on another river, before coming to Ocali, some Indians and Spaniards being on its bank talking together peacefully, one daring Indian, there being many such, gave a Castilian a hard blow with his bow, for no reason whatever, and then jumped into the water, and all his people followed him. He says that the hound, which was nearby, seeing what happened, jumped in after them, and although he overtook other Indians, he says that he did not seize any of them until he came to the one who had struck the blow, and grasping him, he tore him to pieces in the water.

For these attacks and for others that Bruto had made upon them while guarding the army at night, so that no enemy Indian approached it whom he



Spanish Cavalier with War Dog, ca. 1500–1540. An armored horseman with shield and lance was a formidable foe to the Native American warriors of the Southeast. During the conquest the Spaniards used greyhounds trained as attack dogs to assist them. (Courtesy of Osprey Publishing, London)

did not immediately destroy, the Indians avenged themselves by killing him as has been told. Knowing about him from these stories, they shot him very willingly, at the same time showing their skill with their bows and arrows.

Greyhounds have performed wonderful feats in the conquests in the New World, as did Becerrillo on the island of San Juan de Puerto Rico, where the Spaniards gave to the dog from the profits that they made, or through him to his master, who was an harquebusier, the part and share of an harquebusier. To Leoncillo, as son of this hound, there fell 500 pesos in gold at one distribution of the riches won by the famous Vasco Núñez de Balboa, after having discovered the South Sea.

XIX

THE SPANIARDS BUILD A BRIDGE AND CROSS THE RÍO DE OCALI, AND ARRIVE AT OCHILE

The governor, seeing the little respect and less obedience that the Indians had for their cacique Ocali, and that keeping him with him would be of little or no use in the building of the bridge or for any other purpose, decided to release him so that he could return to his people, and so that the other lords of that region should not become alarmed, believing that they were detaining him against his will. Thus he called him one day and said that he had always given him his liberty and treated him as a friend, but that he did not desire that for the sake of this friendship he should lose the confidence of his vassals, nor that they, thinking that he was being held a prisoner, should become more rebellious than they were already. Therefore he begged that he go to them whenever he liked and return when he saw fit, or not, just as he pleased; that he gave him liberty to do anything.

The curaca gladly received it, saying that he wished to return to his vassals solely for the purpose of reducing them to obedience to the governor so that all of them might come to serve him, and if he could not win them over he would come alone, to show the love he had for his lordship's service. Along with this promise he made many others, but carried out none of them, nor did he return as he had promised; of the prisoners who have left prison under their own word of honor, few have done as did Atilius Regulus.

The cacique having gone, the Spaniards, through the efforts of a Genoese engineer named Maese Francisco, laid out the bridge by geometry and built

it of large thick planks thrown out over the water and fastened together with heavy ropes (which had been brought along for such uses). The planks were joined and connected with large and thick stakes that were laid across the tops of them. As there was all the timber in that country that one could desire, they used as much as they liked, and with it the work on the bridge was finished in a few days. It came out so well that men and horses crossed on it at their pleasure.

Before crossing the river, the governor directed his men to set some ambushes in order to capture such Indians as they could to take along as guides, because the few who had come to serve the Castilians fled at the departure of the cacique. They captured thirty Indians, large and small, whom, with flattery, gifts, and promises, and on the other hand with many threats of cruel death if they refused, they induced to guide them to another province that is sixteen leagues from that of Ocali.³ This distance, though uninhabited, was a pleasant country full of many forests and streams that flowed through it, and very level and fertile if it should be cultivated.

The army marched the first eight leagues in two days, and after covering half of the third day's march, the governor went ahead with a hundred cavalry and hundred infantry, and marching the rest of the day and all the following night he came at dawn to a pueblo called Ochile,⁴ which was the first one of a large province named Vitachuco. This province was very extensive, and the route of the Spaniards lay through it for more than fifty leagues. Three brothers had divided it among them;⁵ the eldest of them was named Vitachuco, as was the province itself and its chief pueblo, as we shall see below. He ruled over half of it as of five parts out of ten. The second, whose name is

³From this point Garcilaso's text diverges substantially from the other chroniclers, collapsing the itinerary by apparently deleting the province of Potano, and misidentifying the next several place-names. See the discussion in Hann, "De Soto, Dobyns, and Demography," 3-6.

⁴Both the names Ochile and Vitachuco are misplaced in Garcilaso's narrative. They properly belong in the Apalache province, but are here confused with places and events in Timucuan territory passed through before the army entered Apalache. Garcilaso's Ochile, equivalent in name to Rangel's Agile and Elvas's Axille, appears to be the same place as Aguacaleyquen or Caliquen of the other accounts. Similarly Vitachuco is here transposed and applied to the Napituca of Rangel and Elvas. Note that the Varners' translation of this passage erroneously has Ochile as "the principal village of Vitachuco." Swanton, *Final Report*, 145-46; Hann, "De Soto, Dobyns, and Demography," 5-6; John G. Varner and Jeanette J. Varner, trans. and eds., *The Florida of the Inca* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951), 129.

⁵The installation of brothers as district chiefs within a paramount or complex chiefdom was apparently a common political strategy among late Mississippian societies.

not given here because it has been forgotten, owned three of the other five parts, and the youngest, who was lord of this pueblo of Ochile, and of the same name, had the two [remaining] parts. For what reason or how such a division was made is not known, because in the rest of the provinces through which these Castilians traveled the firstborn inherited, in the manner in which entailed estates are inherited, without any part being given to the second sons. It might be that these parts had been joined through marriages that had been made with the provision that they would again be divided among the sons, or that relatives who had died without legal heirs had left them to the parents of these three brothers with the same condition that they be divided among their successors so that there might be some memory of them. The desire for immortality preserved in fame, since it is natural to men, is found in all nations, however barbarous they may be.

As we have said, then the adelantado arrived at dawn at the pueblo Ochile, which had fifty large and strong houses, because it was a frontier and defense against the neighboring province that he had left behind, which was an enemy, as almost all are in that kingdom to one another. He came upon the pueblo unawares and ordered the military musical instruments to be played, such as trumpets, fifes, and drums, so as to cause greater astonishment with their noise. They seized many Indians who, at the novelty of this clamor, came out of their houses terrified to see what was that thing they had never before heard. They assaulted the house of the curaca, which was a very fine one, consisting of a single chamber more than 120 paces in length and forty in width. It had four doors facing the four cardinal directions. Surrounding the principal chamber and joining it, on the outside, were many apartments that communicated with the interior of a large chamber, as its offices.⁶

In this house was the cacique with many warriors whom he was accustomed to keep with him constantly, as a man who had many enemies, and at the unexpected attack many more men came up from the pueblo. The curaca ordered the call to arms sounded and attempted to go out to fight with the Castilians, but for all the haste with which he and his Indians had taken up their arms to leave the house, the Christians already had gained the four doors and prevented their leaving, threatening to burn them alive if they did

⁶John H. Hann provides an alternative translation of this passage having potential ethnographic significance, thus: "Round about the great room, joined to it, there were many lodgings (*Aposentos*) on the outside, which opened into the inside of the room, like workshops of it . . . (*como oficinas de ella*)." Hann, "De Soto, Dobyns, and Demography," 4.

not surrender. On the other hand they offered them peace, friendship and all good treatment. But the curaca was unwilling to submit either as the result of threats or of rewards [promised] until, after the sun was up, they brought him many of his people whom they had taken. These Indians assured him that the Spaniards were very numerous and that they could not overcome them with arms, but that they could depend upon them and their friendship because they had treated none of the prisoners badly; that he would have to submit to the present necessity, for there was nothing else to do.

The cacique submitted to these persuasions; the governor received him kindly, ordered that the Spaniards treat the Indians in a very friendly manner, and keeping the curaca with him he caused all the rest of the Indians to be released, at which the lord and the vassals were very well pleased.

This victory being won, seeing that in a very beautiful valley on the other side of the pueblo there was a large settlement of houses scattered in groups of four or five, more or less, where there were many Indians, it seemed to the general that it would not be safe to pass the following night in that pueblo, because the Indians, joining together and seeing how few the Castilians were, might attempt to take the curaca away from them and instigate an uprising of all the lords of that district. Therefore he left the pueblo and went to the place where his men were, taking the curaca with him. He found his people camped three leagues from the pueblo; they had been anxious because of his absence, but rejoiced greatly at his coming and at the fine capture he had made. With the cacique went his servants and many other Indian warriors who wished voluntarily to go with him.

XX

THE BROTHER OF THE CURACA OCHILE COMES ON A FRIENDLY VISIT, AND THEY SEND AMBASSADORS TO VITACHUCO

On the following day the army entered Ochile in battle array, the infantry and cavalry formed in squadrons, sounding the trumpets, fifes, and drums, so that the Indians might see that they were not a people to be trifled with. The army being encamped, the governor agreed with the curaca Ochile to send messengers to his two brothers with overtures of peace and friendship, so that, the messages being from him, they would receive them better and

give more credit to their statements. The cacique sent them to each of the two brothers separately with the most favorable words and arguments that he could form, telling them how those Spaniards had come to their country and that they had the desire and intention of having all the Indians for friends and brothers, and that they were traversing other provinces and did no damage where they passed, especially to those who came out to receive them peacefully; that they contented themselves simply with the necessary food; and that if they did not come out to serve them, they ravaged the pueblos, burned the wood of the houses in the place of firewood, so as not to go to the forest for it, consumed wastefully the provisions that they found, taking at discretion more than they needed, and acted otherwise as if they were in an enemy country. All of this was averted by receiving the peace they offered and showing themselves to be friends, if only for their own interests.

The second brother, who was nearest, and whose name we do not know, replied immediately, thanking his brother for the advice that he sent him and saying that he was much pleased at the arrival of the Castilians in his country, that he desired to see and know them, and that he did not come at once with the messengers because he was attending to the things necessary in order to serve them better and to receive them with the finest possible celebration and entertainment; that within three or four days he would go to kiss the governor's hands and give him obedience. Meanwhile he begged his brother to accept and confirm the peace and friendship with the Spaniards, as he regarded them as lords and friends from that time forth.

At the end of the three days Ochile's brother arrived, accompanied by many and very resplendent nobles. He kissed the governor's hands and talked with much familiarity to the captains, officials, and private gentlemen of the army, asking who each of them was, behaving as freely as if he had been brought up among them. The Spaniards made much of the cacique and all his attendants, for the general and his officers entertained with much care and attention the curacas and Indians who came out peacefully, nor did they harm those who were rebellious or damage their pueblos and lands, unless it were unavoidable in taking the necessary food.

The third brother, who was the eldest and the most powerful politically, was unwilling to reply to the message that his brother Ochile sent him; on the other hand he detained the messengers, not allowing them to return. Therefore the two brothers, persuaded and urged by the governor, again sent other messengers on the same errand, adding very favorable words in praise of the Spaniards, saying that he should not fail to accept the peace and

friendship these Christians offered him, for they warned him that they were not people whom he could presume to conquer in war; that personally they were exceedingly brave and were regarded as invincible, and by their lineage, quality and nature they were children of the Sun and the Moon, their gods, and as such they had come from out there where the sun rises. They brought some animals they called horses, so swift, brave, and strong that it was impossible to escape them by flight, nor could they be resisted with arms and force.

Therefore, as brothers concerned for his life and safety, they begged him not to refuse to accept that which was conducive thereto, because to do otherwise would be simply to seek evil and harm for himself and his vassals and lands.

Vitachuco responded most extraordinarily, with a greatness of mind never before heard or imagined in an Indian, so that certainly, if the extravagant threats that he made and the arrogant words that he spoke could be written as the messengers reported them, none of the bravest gentlemen whom the divine Ariosto and the most illustrious and enamored Count Matheo María Boyardo, his predecessor, and other celebrated poets introduce in their works would equal those of this Indian. In the long interval that has passed meanwhile, many of them have been forgotten, and also the order in which they were spoken has been lost, but those who would remember them say explicitly that those words written in the following chapter indisputably and certainly are his, which he sent to say to his two brothers in reply to the embassy they sent to him.

XXI

CONCERNING THE ARROGANT AND PRESUMPTUOUS REPLY OF VITACHUCO, AND HOW HIS BROTHERS GO TO PERSUADE HIM TO PEACE

"It is very clear that you are young and lacking in judgment and experience to say what you do concerning these Spaniards; you praise them highly as virtuous men who do no harm or injury to anyone, and say that they are very brave and are children of the Sun, and deserve whatever service is done them. The confinement in which they have placed you, and the vile and

cowardly spirit that has overcome you there in the short time since you have submitted to serve and become slaves, causes you to speak like women, praising what ought to be condemned and abhorred. Do you not see that these Christians cannot be better than the former ones who committed so many cruelties in this land, since they are of the same nation and laws? Are you not warned of their treachery and perfidy? If you were men of good judgment, you would see that their very lives and actions show them to be children of the devil and not of the Sun and Moon, our gods, because they go from one land to another, killing, robbing, and sacking whatever they find, taking the wives and daughters of others without bringing their own; and in order to settle and make establishments, they are not content with any country of all those that they see and traverse, for it delights them to go about like vagabonds, supporting themselves by the labor and sweat of others. If they were virtuous, as you say, they would not leave their own country, for they could make use of their virtue there, sowing, planting, and breeding in order to sustain life, without prejudice to others and infamy on their own part; but they go about as highwaymen, adulterers, and murderers, without shame before men or fear of any God.

"Tell them not to enter my territory; I promise them, however valiant they may be, that if they set foot in it they shall not leave, for I will consume and put an end to all of them; half of them will be roasted to death and the others boiled."

This was the first reply that the messengers brought from Vitachuco. Following it, he sent many other messages, so that two or three Indians came every day, always blowing a trumpet, and they uttered new threats and other menaces greater than the previous ones. Vitachuco thought to frighten them with various kinds of deaths he said he would visit upon the Castilians, imagined in his fierce mind. Sometimes he sent to say that when they should come to his province it would happen that the earth would open and swallow them all up; other times that he would order that wherever the Spaniards marched the hills that were there would close together and trap them in their midst, burying them alive; or that when the Spaniards should pass through a forest of pines and other very tall and thick trees that were along the road, he would order that such violent and furious winds should blow that they would throw the trees down upon them and crush all of them. At other times he said that he would order a great multitude of birds to pass over them with venom in their beaks that they would let fall upon the Spaniards, with which they would become putrid and corrupt, without any way of escaping it; or that he would poison the waters, grasses, trees, the fields, and

even the air, in such manner that neither men nor horse among the Christians could escape with their lives, so that all of this may serve as a warning to those who might afterward have the boldness to go to his country against his will.

These wild messages and other similar ones Vitachuco sent to say to his brothers and the Spaniards together, with which he showed the ferocity of his spirit; and although at the time the Castilians laughed and joked about his words because they seemed to them absurd and foolish, as they were, because of what this Indian did afterward, as we shall see below, they understood that they had not been simply words, but most ardent desires of a heart as brave and arrogant as his was, and that they were not born of foolishness or simplemindedness, but of an excess of temerity and ferocity.

With these and other such messages that he sent the Spaniards anew every day, this curaca amused them during the eight days they spent in traveling through the states of the two brothers, who served and entertained the Castilians with all their resources and good will, giving them to understand that they desired to please them. On the other hand, they labored with all energy and solicitude to win the eldest brother to the general's obedience and service. Seeing that the messages and persuasions they sent to him availed little or nothing, they agreed to act as messengers themselves. Telling the governor of their decision, they asked permission to carry it out, which he granted, along with many gifts and offers of friendship for them to take to Vitachuco.

With the presence of his brothers and with all that they told him on the governor's behalf and on their own, and learning that the Spaniards were already within his territory and could do him harm if they liked, it seemed well to Vitachuco to put aside the ill will and hatred he felt toward the Castilians, saving it for a better time and occasion, which he expected to find in the carelessness and confidence the Spaniards would feel in his pretended friendship. Then, under guise of it, he would kill them all more easily and with less danger than in open war. With this sinister intention he changed the harsh words that he had used hitherto to others of much suavity and gentleness, saying to his brothers that he had not believed that the Castilians were people of such good parts and qualities as they told him; that now that he was convinced of it he would be very glad to have peace and friendship with them, but that first he wished to know how many days they would be in his country, what quantity of provisions he would have to give them when they went, and what other things they would need for their journey.

The two brothers sent a courier to the governor with this message, and he replied that they would not stay longer in his territory than Vitachuco de-

sired to have them, nor did they want more supplies than he saw fit to give them, or need anything else except his friendship, with which they would have all that was necessary.

XXII

VITACHUCO COMES OUT PEACEFULLY, PLOTS TREASON AGAINST THE SPANIARDS, AND COMMUNICATES IT TO THE INTERPRETERS

Vitachuco indicated that he was satisfied with the affable reply the governor sent and, in order further to dissimulate his evil intentions, he let it be understood and said publicly that his inclination and desire to see the Spaniards in order to serve them increased from day to day, as they themselves would see. He ordered the nobles among his people to get ready to go out to receive the governor, and he ordered that there be on hand in the pueblo a large supply of water, wood, and food for the people, and grass for the horses, and that many provisions be brought from the other pueblos in his state, and all collected in that one where they were, so that there would be no lack of anything for the service and entertainment of the Castilians.

Juan Coles says in his *Relation* that the Indians affirmed that this province of the three brothers was two hundred leagues in length.

These things being provided for, Vitachuco went out from his pueblo accompanied by his two brothers and by five hundred Indian nobles handsomely adorned with plumes of various colors, with their bows in their hands and some of the finest and most elegant of the arrows they make for use on state occasions. After having marched two leagues, they found the governor encamped with his army in a beautiful valley. The general had marched there by very short stages because he knew that Vitachuco would wish to come out on the road to greet him, and so he did kiss his hands with a great show of peace and friendship. He begged the governor to pardon him for the disordered words that he had spoken concerning the Spaniards, through misunderstanding, saying that now since he was set right he would show by his actions how much he desired to serve his lordship and all his people, and by means of them he would make restitution for the offense committed against them by his words; and in order to do so with better

right, he said that for himself and in the name of all his vassals he gave obedience to his lordship and acknowledged him as lord.

The governor received and embraced him with much punctiliousness and told him that he did not remember the past words because he had not heard them with the idea of keeping them in mind; that he derived much satisfaction from the present friendship and he would also be greatly pleased to learn his desires in order to comply with them and not go against his wishes.

The *maese de campo* and the other military officers, the ministers of his Majesty's hacienda, and all the Spaniards in general spoke to Vitachuco with signs of pleasure at his coming. He was about thirty-five years of age, of very good stature, as are all the Indians of La Florida generally; his aspect showed clearly the gallantry of his spirit.

On the following day the Spaniards entered in war formation into the principal pueblo of Vitachuco, called by the same name, which contained two hundred large and strong houses besides many other, small ones that were on their outskirts like suburbs. The Christians were lodged in the one and the other, and the governor and the men of his guard and in his service, and the three brother curacas were lodged in Vitachuco's house, which as it was large had room for all of them.

The Spaniards and the three caciques spent two days together with much celebration and rejoicing. On the third day the two younger curacas asked permission of the governor and of Vitachuco to return to their lands. Having received it and the gifts the general gave them, they went in peace, very well satisfied with the good treatment the Spaniards had accorded them.

For four days after his brothers had left, Vitachuco continued to make a great show of serving the Christians, so as to render them careless in order to be able to carry out his desires and plans against them more safely, because his purpose and intention was to kill all of them, without one escaping. This desire in him was so ardent and passionate that it blinded him, so that he did not weigh and consider the means he adopted to that end, or discuss them with his captains and servants, or obtain any counsel of relatives or friends who would tell him dispassionately what would be best. It seemed to him, on the other hand, that they would hinder rather than aid in his good work and that it was enough for him to desire it and plan it alone for everything to come out successfully. The counsel that he sought and took was from him who gave it in accordance with his own wishes and desires, without regard for obstacles, errors of judgment, or prudence, and he avoided those who could give sound advice—a condition peculiar to self-confident people, on

whom their own actions inflict punishment for their imprudence, as happened to this cacique, poor of understanding and lacking in judgment.

Unable to endure longer the stimulus and fires of the passion and desire he had to kill the Castilians, on the fifth day after his brothers had gone Vitachuco secretly summoned four Indians whom the governor had brought as interpreters, for since the provinces had different languages, an interpreter was needed for almost every one of them, so that they could pass on from one to another what the first speaker had said. He told them about his fine plans, saying to them that he had determined to kill the Spaniards, who, through their great confidence in his friendship, it seemed to him, were now very much off their guard and trusted him and his vassals. He said that from the latter he had prepared more than ten thousand chosen warriors and had ordered them that, having hidden their arms in a forest that was nearby, they come in and out of the pueblo with water, firewood and grass, and the other things necessary for the service of the Christians, so that the latter, seeing them unarmed and in the guise of servants, would think nothing of it and trust them fully. After two or three more days had passed he would invite the governor to go out to the field to see his vassals, whom he wished to show him drawn up in war formation so that he could see his great power and the number of soldiers with whom he could serve him in the conquests that he might make in the future. To these arguments he added others, and said: "The governor, since we are friends, will go out unsuspectingly, and I shall order that a dozen strong and courageous Indians go near him. On approaching my squadron, they will carry him off by violence however he may come, on foot or mounted, and take him into the midst of the Indians, who will then assail the rest of the Spaniards, who will be off their guard and disturbed by the sudden seizure of their captain and so may be taken and killed very easily. Upon those who are captured I expect to visit all the forms of death I have sent to threaten them with, so that they may see that those were not follies and absurdities, as they thought when they ridiculed them as such, but real menaces." He said that he intended to roast some of them alive, boil others alive, and bury others alive with their heads outside; and that still others would be poisoned with poison from the yew tree so that they could see themselves become corrupt and rot away. Some would be suspended by the feet from the highest trees available, to become food for the birds. In short, there would be no manner of cruel death that he would not inflict upon them. He charged them [the interpreters] to give him their opinion and keep the secret; he promised them that when the affair was over, if they desired to remain in his country, he would give them honorable em-

ployments and offices, noble and beautiful women, and other privileges, honors and liberties that the highest nobles of his state enjoyed; and if they wished to return to their own country, he would send them well escorted and safeguarded along the roads they traveled, until they reached their houses. See how those Christians were taking them by force and making slaves of them, carrying them so far from their country that, although they might liberate them later, they could never return to it. Note, besides the particular injury to them, the general and universal hurt to all that great kingdom; the Castilians did not come to do them any good whatever, but to deprive them of their ancient liberty and make them their vassals and tributaries, and to take away their most beautiful wives and daughters and the finest of their lands and possessions, every day imposing on them new taxes and tributes. All this was not to be borne, but should be remedied in time, before they settled and established themselves among them. He begged and charged them, since the action was for the common good, to assist him with their efforts and counsel, to aid his attempt as just, his determination as courageous, and the scheme and plan as certain to succeed.

The four Indian interpreters replied to him that the enterprise and exploit were worthy of his spirit and valor, that all his plans seemed good to them, and that, in following such an excellent scheme, he could not fail to attain the end desired; that the whole kingdom was much indebted and obligated to him for having protected and defended the life, property, honor, and liberty of all its inhabitants; and that they would do what he ordered them, keep the secret, and supplicate the Sun and the Moon to promote and favor that project as he had planned and ordered it. They themselves could not serve him except in the will and spirit, but if they had the means in proportion to their desires, his lordship would need no other servants than themselves to execute that grand and notable project.

XXIII

VITACHUCO ORDERS HIS CAPTAINS TO CONSUMMATE THE TREASON, AND REQUESTS THE GOVERNOR TO COME OUT AND SEE HIS MEN

The arrogant Vitachuco and the four Indian interpreters separated after their consultation with great inward satisfaction, the latter expecting to see

themselves soon free, enjoying important employments and offices and the possessors of noble and beautiful women, and the former already imagining himself successful in the project, which was poorly conceived and worse planned. It seemed to him already that he could see himself adored by the surrounding nations and by all that great kingdom for having freed them and preserved their lives and property; he imagined that he could already hear the praises and commendations the Indians must give him with great acclamation for such a notable deed. He heard in fancy the songs the women and children would sing in chorus, dancing before him, composed in praise and commemoration of his prowess, a thing very customary among those Indians.

Vitachuco became more arrogant hourly with these imaginings and others like them, which the imprudent and deranged are accustomed to conceive, to their greater harm and perdition. He summoned his captains and telling them of his vain thoughts and follies—not so that they might object, or advise what he ought to do, but so that they might obey unquestioningly and comply with his will—he said to them that they must make haste to carry out what he had ordered them so many days before for the purpose of killing those Christians, and not delay the honor and glory he would earn for that deed by means of their strength and valor, which glory he told them he was already enjoying in his imagination. He therefore charged them to release him from those cares that were oppressing him and fulfill the hopes he regarded as so certain.

The captains replied that they were ready and prepared to obey and serve him as a lord whom they loved so much, and said that they had the Indian warriors ready for the day they all looked forward to; that they were waiting only for the hour to be set to carry out their orders. Vitachuco was well satisfied with this reply and dismissed the captains, telling them that he would notify them in time of what they must do.

When the four interpreters again considered with better judgment what the cacique had said and communicated to them, the enterprise seemed to them difficult and its success impossible, alike because of the strength of the Spaniards who had shown themselves invincible, and because they had never considered them so unprepared and careless that they could be surprised by treason, nor were they so simple that they would allow themselves to be taken and carried off as Vitachuco had planned and ordered. Therefore, the immediate and certain fear overcoming the distant and doubtful hope—for it seemed to them that they would also have to die as parties to the treason if the Castilians learned of it before they revealed it—they decided to go over to the other side, and breaking their promise of secrecy, they told Juan Ortiz

of the treason plotted, so that with a long account of everything that Vitachuco had communicated to them he could tell it to the governor.

When the adelantado learned of the curaca's wickedness and perfidy, and had consulted with his captains about it, it seemed to them advisable to dissemble to the Indian, allowing him to believe that they were ignorant of the affair. Thus they ordered the rest of the Spaniards to be on their guard and watchful, but to appear careless so that the Indians might not take alarm. They were also of the opinion that the best and surest method of capturing Vitachuco was the same one that he had planned for taking the governor, so that he might fall into his own trap. For this purpose they ordered a dozen very stout soldiers to prepare to go with the general so as to seize the cacique on the day on which he should invite the governor to go out to inspect his army. Having made these preparations secretly, the Castilians were on the watch to see what Vitachuco would do.

The latter, when the day he so desired had come, having prepared everything that seemed to him sufficient and necessary for carrying out his evil intentions, went early in the morning to the governor and with much humility and respect said to him that he begged his lordship to be pleased to do him and all his vassals the great kindness and favor of coming out to the field where they were awaiting him, so that he could see them drawn up in squadrons in battle array. Favored by his appearance and presence, all of them would feel obligated to serve him with greater spirit and readiness on the occasions that might arise in the future for his lordship's service, and he [Vitachuco] would be pleased to have him see them thus in battle array so that he might know the men and see the numbers with which he was able to serve him, and also in order to see whether the Indians of that country knew how to form squadrons like the other nations that he had heard were skilled in the military arts.

The governor, feigning ignorance and carelessness, replied that he would be very much pleased to see them as he said, and that in order to add to the display of the field and so that the Indians might also have something to see, he would order the Spanish cavalry and infantry to march out formed in squadrons, so that they could have friendly skirmishes with each other, exercising themselves in sport rather than in earnest.

The curaca did not desire so much ceremony and ostentation, but with the obstinate and blind determination he had in his mind to go on with that affair, he did not refuse the contest, believing that his own strength and bravery and that of his vassals would be enough to overcome and rout the Castilians, however well prepared they might be.